

SENATOR CROSBY: One minute.

SPEAKER WITHEM: ...during most of that time for us not doing it, but we haven't done it. My argument is that, as to why this amendment is a good one, is that there is an established mechanism for adjusting the school district's annual lid. We have not gone through that mechanism and, therefore, what is in LB 1059...in LB 613 is not appropriate. I'd like to call your attention though, because I bashed the Legislature myself a little bit, I'd like to call your attention to what it says at the bottom, because the Governor has had some responsibilities and the Governor has been derelict in meeting those responsibilities. Read what that says. I'll discuss that next time I have an opportunity to speak.

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you, Senator Withem. Before beginning the debate on the Withem amendment, I'd like to call the Legislature's attention to the fact that Senator Vrtiska has, as his guests today in the north balcony, 19 third graders from Tecumseh Elementary School and with them is their teacher. Would you all please stand and be welcomed by your Legislature. Thank you for being here. Senator McKenzie on the Withem amendment.

SENATOR MCKENZIE: Thank you, Madam President and members of the body. Senator Withem, I will address a couple of points that you...that you made, but first I wanted to start briefly with a little about the blue sheet that was handed out to talk about the difference between what was originally proposed and what's in the committee amendments and, of course, Senator Withem's amendment to the amendments taking out any kind of lid for schools I think presents us with three different issues to argue at the same time. But, basically, if you will look at the section under schools you will see that, in fact, schools have three different levels of lids. They start with a zero percent spending lid. In order to move above zero percent they have to have a supermajority vote of the governing body, so that 75 percent has to approve spending beyond zero. After they've made that decision they're allowed then to spend at the allowable growth rate that the Department of Education establishes for them. The majority of schools in Nebraska are at 4 percent. There are only 54 out of the 707 school districts in Nebraska who chose to stay at zero percent. All the rest have gone to allow the growth. Now some school districts are at 6.5 percent, Senator Withem, I believe, said 5.5. The top of the cap right